

Transcript of Proceedings, 9/19/2007
Volume VI

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
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1 BEFORE THE
2 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN
3 -----
4 INVESTIGATION OF AREA CODE RELIEF)
5 FOR THE 715 AREA CODE IN NORTHERN) Docket No.
6 WISCONSIN) 5-TN-100
7)
8 -----
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A P P E A R A N C E S

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OF COMMISSION STAFF:

Kathy Bakke

Joyce Dingman

(FOR INDEX SEE BACK OF TRANSCRIPT.)

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1 (Proceedings 7:00 p.m.)

2 MR. OLIVO: What we've done in the paper
3 is we got your news release, and we did a rewrite on
4 that based on I'm not sure if I contacted anybody
5 else or not, but we talked about the two options,
6 the overlay and the split option and the fact that
7 these hearings were going to be held.

8 Is there anything fundamentally other than
9 that that you have going on?

10 MS. BAKKE: I'm not -- I want to make sure
11 I'm understanding your question.

12 MR. OLIVO: Yeah, sure.

13 MS. BAKKE: Basically the 715 Area Code is
14 projected to run out of numbers of assignable
15 prefixes.

16 MR. OLIVO: Right.

17 MS. BAKKE: By the fourth quarter of 2009.

18 MR. OLIVO: Right.

19 MS. BAKKE: And so what the Commission is
20 in the midst of doing right now is twofold: Number
21 one, we're coming out and we're trying to educate
22 the public about the different relief alternatives
23 that can be used when an area code needs to be
24 relieved and additional numbers introduced, and
25 we're also very interested in obtaining public

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1 feedback on what they feel would be the most viable
2 relief alternatives in their area.

3 So really the issue before the Commission
4 right now is not whether to implement area code
5 relief, it's how to implement area code relief.

6 MR. OLIVO: Right. Let me ask you this,
7 what -- in the discussions that you had today, what
8 appear to be the most -- the pros and cons between
9 the two options?

10 MS. BAKKE: Do you want me to take this
11 one or do you want to do it?

12 MR. COCKE: I can expand on it. My name
13 is Joe Cocke. I'm with the North American Numbering
14 Plan Administration, NANPA, and the traditional
15 method is the geographic split, and I think
16 everybody's probably familiar with that. And
17 geographic split is where one side a line is drawn
18 through the area code and one side retains the old
19 area code and the other side changes to the new area
20 code. Both sides of the line people retain their
21 seven digit number, they retain seven digit dialing,
22 and one side has to change to a new area code.

23 The implementation process involves a
24 permissive dialing period where you can -- customers
25 calling numbers in the area that changes, you can

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1 dial either the seven digits across the boundary
2 line or the old area code or the new area code
3 during this permissive period, and then at the end
4 of that permissive period everybody has to dial the
5 correct area code into that area that changes.

6 And following the mandatory dialing date,
7 there is a period of -- a recorded announcement
8 period, and that means when somebody dials the old
9 area code instead, they'll get a recording that
10 tells them the area code has changed, the new area
11 code is this, you must hang up and dial the correct
12 area code. They don't give a -- it's not a 10 digit
13 number, intercept number, uh, recording.

14 And then that number, that recording will
15 only be on for a few months, and then after that
16 recording then those prefixes that have changed,
17 they are now freed up to be able to be reassigned
18 back into the area that did not change.

19 MR. OLIVO: Okay.

20 MR. COCKE: So that's how we expand the
21 number of prefixes available. So that's basically
22 the process for an area code split.

23 With an overlay, there's no split line, no
24 telephone numbers are changed, no one loses their
25 area code, we assign a new area code to the same

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1 geography. And because of an overlay, the FCC
2 requires that 10 digit dialing be done for all
3 calls, including local calls, and there is also a
4 permissive dialing period where you can adjust to
5 dialing the 10 digits but, if you forget, you can
6 dial seven digits and your call would still be
7 completed. At the end of that permissive period,
8 there's no intercept recording, you will get a
9 recording saying you must dial -- you must hang up
10 and dial the number including the area code.

11 Now probably the -- the common theme here
12 is that there's a permissive period, there's an
13 adjustment period to transition to the change and
14 also that there won't be any increase to the cost of
15 a call, whether it's a split or an overlay. If it
16 was a local call before the change, it will continue
17 to be a local call.

18 MS. BAKKE: And just to expand on that a
19 little bit, I think from a customer's prospective
20 they would say with a geographic split the real
21 benefit from a consumer prospective is that they get
22 to retain seven digit dialing for their local calls,
23 and half of them would say the benefit is they get
24 to keep their area code and seven digit dialing.

25 The drawback from a consumer prospective

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1 with this option is that half of the customers are
2 going to have to change their area code, and for
3 business customers that means an added expense for
4 them with regard to changing letterhead, business
5 cards, stationery, invoices, any kind of signage
6 that they would have.

7 With an overlay, customers perceive the
8 benefit as being everybody gets to keep their
9 service as is, nobody has the expense of changing
10 letterhead and business cards unless of course they
11 only have a seven digit number on their printed
12 material, that everybody doesn't have the
13 inconvenience of notifying friends and family that
14 their number has changed; however, everyone is
15 inconvenienced by having to learn a new dialing
16 pattern and dial a 10 digit number.

17 And some customers have also expressed to
18 us their concern that within their same community
19 there may be customers that have the 715 Area Code
20 and the new area code and how would they know which
21 one they would need to dial if their neighbor was
22 assigned a new area code and they didn't know it.

23 And so those are kind of the pros and cons
24 that we've been hearing from consumers at these
25 public hearings.

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1 MR. OLIVO: Also there's no real intuitive
2 way to know if I'm an area code, if I'm in -- if I
3 was say in Superior and I was calling a number, it
4 might be a number that's a toll call and I may not
5 know it.

6 MR. COCKE: That's right.

7 MR. OLIVO: So that's -- that's a little
8 less intuitive.

9 MS. DINGMAN: Yes.

10 MR. COCKE: Well, a toll call would
11 require one plus 10.

12 MR. OLIVO: Okay. So you couldn't
13 complete the call.

14 MR. COCKE: Right.

15 MR. OLIVO: If it -- okay. Then that was
16 a question I had.

17 MS. BAKKE: But I think one area of
18 confusion that certainly is a real one from a
19 consumer education standpoint would be for calls
20 that may be in an extended area service arrangement
21 or an extended community calling arrangement where
22 there is -- it's not billed as a long distance call
23 but, depending on your phone company's options,
24 there may be a permanent charge from those calls
25 that may be a little lower than what a traditional

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1 long distance call may be. And in those
2 circumstances customers may have the different area
3 code and you're right, I think there could be some
4 confusion as customers transition into the new
5 relief plan and they become familiar with the people
6 that they're calling and what their new number is.

7 MR. OLIVO: Unless of course you have
8 CenturyTel unlimited long distance.

9 MR. SCRIDNER: Thank you.

10 MS. DINGMAN: A little commercial
11 interruption.

12 MR. SCRIDNER: It's true, there is a lot
13 of new options out there where long distance doesn't
14 really matter, it's already clear with a basic
15 charge.

16 WENDELL FRISKE, PUBLIC WITNESS

17 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT

18 MR. FRISKE: Well, I've experienced, you
19 know, all of our family, a lot of them are down in
20 the Twin Cities. It's been quite a few years back
21 this whole thing changed down there, and it wasn't
22 this big of a hassle. I mean we caught on to it
23 right away.

24 From I guess from hearing what she said, I
25 would be in favor now of the geographical split

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1 rather than doing it the other way. It would be
2 less confusion.

3 MR. COCKE: I think that the -- from a --
4 from a residence prospective as a customer, that the
5 benefits of seven digit dialing is what everybody's
6 been enjoying for so many years and that's what
7 they'd love to have so they favor a split, and
8 there's always the assumption that they're going to
9 keep 715 so there's that risk if you favor a split.
10 Because a decision hasn't been made which side is
11 going to change, you may favor a split but you also
12 may end up changing your area code and for a
13 resident that may -- that may or may not be an
14 issue.

15 For the businessman, if his -- if his
16 revenue flow depends upon his telephone traffic, and
17 his telephone number is advertised and his telephone
18 number changes as a result of a split, there is a
19 direct impact in his business and the need for him
20 to advertise, to market his new telephone number.
21 And we've seen instances where the businessman would
22 have his telephone number on his product and when
23 his customers got low on the stock of his product
24 then he would -- they would look at the telephone
25 number on the product and call for another order,

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1 and if that telephone number changes because the
2 recording period only lasts for a certain period of
3 time and that telephone number eventually will get
4 reassigned to somebody else, he will eventually feel
5 that he has lost business because of that split.

6 So that's the -- there's the pros and cons
7 of a geographic split with business versus
8 residents.

9 MR. OLIVO: And we went through all of
10 that, you know, among the things that, you know,
11 that we talked about is how much pain and discontent
12 would there be with customers versus businesses.
13 And I guess the way we came out of it is this, you
14 know, in terms of overall impact it would impact
15 businesses more substantially and that, you know,
16 anything that hurts businesses in our area, because
17 we're so chronically, you know, unemployment is high
18 and, you know, we don't need to make things tougher
19 for businesses, especially in our area. I mean
20 granted it's the same pain everybody else feels, but
21 perhaps in a more competitive market, you know, a
22 small thing like that. Up here it's magnified and
23 it has more of an impact.

24 I guess none of us likes to be seriously
25 inconvenienced, although it's debatable whether in

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1 the grand scheme of things hitting the button three
2 more times is that great of an inconvenience, but
3 there isn't, you know, a potential there for an
4 economic loss, it just means that you have to call
5 grandma again and grumble with the phone company.
6 Whereas with the businessman, if he loses an order
7 because I'm sorry this is not a working number and
8 your client goes to some other provider, that's an
9 issue.

10 MR. COCKE: That's right.

11 MR. OLIVO: And, you know. You know, it
12 wasn't, as you said, nine times out of 10 this is
13 not going to be a great big deal, which obviously
14 since we don't have the hall packed it's not, but
15 there is some significance to it.

16 MR. COCKE: The -- the area up here is
17 probably a heavy tourism industry.

18 MR. OLIVO: Uh-huh.

19 MR. COCKE: And there's also cottage
20 industry, cottage type businesses where they have a
21 product, it may be in the home and some industry,
22 you know. With businesses, they have a little
23 catalog, they send out their catalog to a mailing
24 list, and they may have their telephone number on
25 that catalog and it may not be an 800 number.

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1 MR. OLIVO: Yep.

2 MR. COCKE: And so that catalog sales
3 would be impacted as well.

4 MR. OLIVO: I can think of one right off
5 the bat and that's resorts. This area is heavily
6 into resorts, chamber of commerces, bait stores, all
7 of which rely on these mailers, these kinds of
8 things, and to have them have to change their
9 numbers out to a clientele that is primarily in the
10 cities or in Chicago or wherever else, that could be
11 an issue. It could be an issue for them.

12 MS. BAKKE: Just out of curiosity, in
13 light of some of the coverage that you've done in
14 your paper and some of the other media coverage that
15 may have taken place in this area, does it surprise
16 you that more of the general public didn't come
17 tonight and appear to learn more about what this is
18 about and express their opinion on the best relief
19 alternatives?

20 MR. OLIVO: I think there's a couple of
21 things going on. Number one, it's two years away.
22 As I said earlier, we're more worried about what's
23 going to happen with their next paycheck than that,
24 you know. The devil that's close to your door now
25 is the one you pay attention to.

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1 The -- second of all -- second of all, you
2 know, it's -- I don't think it's that great of an
3 issue, and what I haven't thought is what you told
4 me that you're getting an awful lot of the stuff
5 back on the web. I have found in the newspaper we
6 have a web presence, and a lot of the stuff, the
7 news releases we get, are from Internet.

8 And because of the distances around here,
9 we have a high penetration of telephone companies
10 and there's a lot of people who do an awful lot of
11 their business via e-mail rather than drive with 24
12 miles to Ashland. If you're living in the southern
13 part of Ashland County, it's a 48 hour -- I'm sorry,
14 a 48 mile drive, this isn't the middle of winter, it
15 would be 48 hours sometimes. But it's a 48 mile
16 drive. If your car is like mine, that's 24 miles a
17 gallon, that's two gallons, that's six bucks, you
18 know, maybe not. You understand.

19 MS. BAKKE: Right, absolutely.

20 MR. OLIVO: And people do those kinds of
21 manipulations in their heads without thinking about
22 it. It's just one of the byproducts of living here.

23 MS. BAKKE: Right.

24 MR. OLIVO: And for something that isn't
25 that big of a deal yet, I think it's human nature

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1 and it's understandable.

2 MS. DINGMAN: Now am I remembering
3 correctly that you said your newspaper had come out
4 in favor of the overlay?

5 MR. OLIVO: Yeah, we came out in favor of
6 the overlay. We read some of the industry material
7 that was sent to us also by I think we got some
8 mailing from CenturyTel or from somebody else.

9 MR. SCRIDNER: Yeah.

10 MR. OLIVO: I don't remember who it was,
11 but it talked about it and it made -- it made a
12 strong point about the changes that it would involve
13 to industry and it would affect us, too. We have --
14 I've got business cards. We have advertising, you
15 know. We'd have to change our website and do this,
16 do that and do the other thing. Of course we also
17 own a printing company, too, so it would send some
18 business our way, but let's not get into naked greed
19 here.

20 But I guess we just kind of, you know, you
21 have to do a balancing act in so many things,
22 development over the environment and those kind of
23 balancing tests and those kind of things you have to
24 do in a thing like this. And we just came down and
25 decided well, you know, at least for me I can learn

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1 how to add three more numbers so that, you know.
2 I'm going to be, you know. There's a chance that we
3 could win on the Area A/Area B lottery, there's a
4 chance we could lose, and if we all dial 10, you
5 know, that's a small loss. I think considering what
6 you have here, that sounded like the, you know, the
7 win/win situation.

8 MS. DINGMAN: Yeah.

9 MR. SCRIDNER: Joe, in your prospective,
10 the biggest downfall from the overlay is the 10
11 digit dialing, but do you see something in the
12 future where we're going to be required to use 10
13 digits anyway so we get it out of the way now, or
14 Kathy or anybody else?

15 MR. COCKE: Yeah, I think it was the --
16 well, the one organization, which is the Industry
17 Numbering Committee, a number of years back they had
18 recommended that the nation go to a standard 10
19 digit dialing plan, and I think that was submitted
20 to the FCC many years ago.

21 MR. SCRIDNER: I remember that.

22 MR. COCKE: So there's -- there are a lot
23 of advantages to transitioning to the 10 digit
24 dialing prospective. The -- because the FCC has
25 given a certain amount of authority to the

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1 individual states to decide on how an area code is
2 implemented, the FCC isn't really -- hasn't reached
3 that point where it's going to dictate to the
4 states. I think the states are still enjoying that
5 authority to decide on a split versus an overlay.

6 MS. BAKKE: But long-term, Joe, and stop
7 me if you'd like to add something, when you start
8 talking about numbering resources, there are a
9 finite number of area codes that are available for
10 assignment just as there are a finite number of
11 prefixes within the area code available for
12 assignment, and if I recall there are about -- is it
13 about 31 area codes that are remaining for
14 assignment within the North America Numbering Plan?
15 Sorry, 310.

16 MR. COCKE: 310, right.

17 MS. BAKKE: 310 area codes that are
18 remaining, and so there are industry discussions
19 that are taking place for long-term planning about
20 what do we do when those area codes are eventually
21 used up. When those run out, what do you do.

22 MR. OLIVO: 11 number dialing.

23 MS. BAKKE: And on a national basis how do
24 we make those changes.

25 MR. COCKE: Right. Our forecast for the

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1 NANPA, the North America Numbering Plan, is it will
2 exhaust some time beyond 2037, and over the years
3 that exhaust date has been pushed out most recently
4 due to a thousand block number pooling. But this is
5 not just a U.S. issue, the numbering plan includes
6 Canada, Bermuda, 16 Caribbean countries. We also
7 have U.S. territories like Guam, Suppan, America
8 Samoa, they have area codes as well, and so it's an
9 international issue as to what would happen close to
10 the end of that available number of area codes.

11 But the industry has been looking at
12 potentially a four digit area code and a four digit
13 prefix. So probably worse than Y2K would be a
14 transition to a 12 digit numbering plan.

15 MR. OLIVO: Oh my God, yeah.

16 MS. DINGMAN: Are you familiar with number
17 pooling? Have you had a chance to read about that?

18 MR. OLIVO: Vaguely. I had a chance to
19 read something.

20 MS. DINGMAN: Traditionally numbers have
21 been blocked in blocks of 10,000, and number pooling
22 allows us to give them out in blocks of 1,000. And
23 in the 715 Area Code back when that happened, which
24 was August of 2003, only 25 of the 253 rate centers
25 in the 715 Area Code had to participate in it

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1 because of technological reasons. Since then
2 technology has changed, and the PSC just got
3 permission from the FCC to consider requiring more
4 number pooling in 715. So that that may help extend
5 when the area code runs out, but it's not going to
6 change the fact that it's going to.

7 MR. OLIVO: I understand that this whole
8 business is to, well, to a certain extent it is
9 being fueled by natural growth in phone numbers but
10 it's also being driven by the increasing use of
11 telecommunications in modem, in control systems,
12 where, you know, a computer will dial simply another
13 computer for whatever reason and there is simply
14 more use of telephones as -- as for communications
15 but also for systems control and other purposes like
16 that.

17 MS. DINGMAN: Right. You used to think
18 about it, everybody had one telephone number, you
19 just had your home phone. Now you've got a home
20 phone, maybe you've got a line for the computer,
21 you've got a couple of cell phones, you go to the
22 ATM, that uses one, and your OnStar car, that uses
23 one.

24 MS. BAKKE: Pagers.

25 MS. DINGMAN: Pagers, yep.

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1 MS. BAKKE: Alarms.

2 MR. COCKE: There's -- it's interesting,
3 you start thinking about well, you know, in some
4 geographic areas there's just one incumbent
5 telephone company, and in since the Telecom Act of
6 '96 there was the ex -- the authorization of local
7 exchange competition. So the incumbent phone
8 companies were the original telephone providers, and
9 now there's competitors that want to get the
10 business from the incumbents. There's also the
11 paging companies and the wireless, the PCS and the
12 cell phone companies. In addition to that, there's
13 this new voiceover IP product.

14 MR. OLIVO: What is the impact of VOIP or
15 other alternatives to land line phones?

16 MR. COCKE: VOIP is a big segment.
17 They're not authorized directly by the FCC to
18 receive numbering resources. There's one company
19 that has been authorized by the FCC, the rest of
20 VOIP providers get their numbering resources by
21 partnering with a CLEC, one of those local exchange
22 competitors. And so we have the CLEC are one of the
23 avenues, and as matter of fact the R Box and the
24 incumbents or the independents are also partnering
25 with some of the VOIP providers as well as cable

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1 T.V. providers to provide numbering resources to the
2 VOIP providers.

3 And so there is -- there is a segment of
4 the Telecom industry that is using many of these
5 numbering resources. So that's a drive for the
6 demand as well.

7 Now 715 is probably kind of unique in the
8 fact that we have approximately 70 service providers
9 all needing numbering resources. Those are the ones
10 that we have been able to identify, not including
11 the VOIP providers, and there are -- a number of
12 years ago there was a service that was called I
13 guess it was like an Internet fax service.

14 MR. OLIVO: Right.

15 MR. COCKE: You could subscribe for free
16 and they would assign you a fax number and you send
17 a fax to that number and it would show up on your
18 e-mail, and so this was -- this was a service where
19 they gave away numbers, and if you bought their
20 vertical services then you pay for the service.
21 Well, they were giving away numbers in many area
22 codes across the United States, and this similar
23 kind of marketing plan has been done by some of the
24 VOIP providers as well.

25 We have -- we have knowledge of customers

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1 that are receiving numbers that are outside of the
2 country. You can be in California and have a
3 Wisconsin telephone number used over VOIP. So it's
4 a proliferation of services that really is at hand.
5 You can think of you go to an ATM and you put in
6 your -- you slide your card in, many of these ATMs,
7 they have not transitioned to a DSL line, they are
8 using a dial-up number. You go to a point of sale
9 where you do a credit card purchase, and it dials up
10 a number.

11 MR. OLIVO: Yeah, you can hear the modem.

12 MR. COCKE: And a lot of people think it
13 dials an 800 number. Well, many people don't
14 realize that 800 numbers translate to a POTS number,
15 plan old telephone number, somewhere.

16 A good example where I live is there's --
17 we call it AAA, it's the towing service, and
18 depending -- they have one statewide 800 number.
19 Well, depending on where you're located when you
20 dial that number, it translates to a local telephone
21 number where the tow truck is closest to you. And
22 so 800 numbers can use up multiple telephone numbers
23 throughout many area codes. And if you think about
24 it, it's no longer just an 800, there's 800, 888,
25 866 and 877 are toll free numbers now. So we have

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1 an expansion of the 800 service showing that
2 services are in great demand.

3 MR. OLIVO: You know, and that's -- it's
4 gotten to the place where it's difficult to be able
5 to tell, if you're not really into it, what a toll
6 free number is as opposed to a pay premium service
7 number like a 900 number. And, if you're not
8 careful, you can have a nasty shock when you get the
9 phone bill.

10 MS. DINGMAN: Absolutely. You can have a
11 huge phone bill.

12 MR. OLIVO: Thinking you dialed 800 or one
13 of these 800 equivalent numbers.

14 MS. BAKKE: And there's some services that
15 allow you to dial into an 800 number, it gives you a
16 message that says there will be a charge for the
17 call if you continue, and if you press an option to
18 continue you can get into some very significant
19 charges and now you've bypassed 900 blocking that
20 may be established on the line.

21 MR. OLIVO: Yes.

22 MS. BAKKE: Because you actually
23 originated your call.

24 MR. OLIVO: I am well aware of that. I
25 had a long discussion with a 16 year old about that

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1 exact thing a few years back.

2 MS. DINGMAN: Yes.

3 MS. BAKKE: I think one thing just to
4 point out some of the different relief alternatives
5 that you're seeing presented here tonight on boards,
6 and I see that you have some of our information, our
7 frequently asked questions, and perhaps you've seen
8 some of the different maps that you may have
9 received in a press release, these were alternatives
10 that when industry met and developed the plan that
11 these were plans that were filed with the
12 Commission, and the Commission is not bound to
13 accept one of these individual alternatives.
14 Although it may be one of these alternatives, they
15 certainly have the discretion to make the decision
16 about whether it's an overlay or a split and, if it
17 is a split, they make the final decision on where
18 the split line should be.

19 MR. OLIVO: But those are the two
20 alternatives that are under consideration, either a
21 split or an overlay?

22 MS. BAKKE: That's correct. So certainly
23 we, even though tonight was not well-attended for
24 public comment.

25 MR. OLIVO: That's because they trust us

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1 so much.

2 MS. BAKKE: But we also have been
3 accepting feedback as you know through our website,
4 people can file comments electronically, and if they
5 don't have access to the Internet they can send
6 their comments directly to the Commission in writing
7 as well. And whether they've attended a hearing or
8 whether they file electronically or in writing, all
9 of those comments become part of the public record
10 and are considered equally.

11 MR. OLIVO: Okay. Anything else?

12 MS. BAKKE: Any other questions from you?

13 MR. OLIVO: No, ma'am.

14 MS. DINGMAN: I think actually for our
15 court reporter if both of you could give your name
16 and spell it for her.

17 MR. OLIVO: Okay.

18 MS. DINGMAN: She'll have that.

19 MR. OLIVO: My name is Rick Olivo, O L I V
20 O. I'm a reporter for the Daily Press in Ashland.

21 THE REPORTER: Can I get an address?

22 MR. OLIVO: I'll give you my card.

23 (The hearing concluded at 7:40 p.m.)

24 * * *

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1 STATE OF WISCONSIN)

2 MILWAUKEE COUNTY)

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4 I, JENNIFER M. STEIDTMANN, RPR, CRR, Registered
5 Professional Reporter, Certified Realtime Reporter, with
6 the firm of Gramann Reporting, 710 North Plankinton
7 Avenue, Suite 710, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, do hereby certify
8 that I reported the foregoing proceedings had on
9 September 19, 2007, and that the same is true and correct
10 in accordance with my original machine shorthand notes
11 taken at said time and place.

12

13

14 _____
Jennifer M. Steidtmann

15 Registered Professional Reporter

16 Certified Realtime Reporter

17

18 Dated this 20th day of September, 2007.

19 Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	MARKED	ADMITTED
	NONE		